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Senator Dianne Feinstein

of California

Senator Feinstein Announces Plans to Introduce Private Bill to Grant Permanent Resident Status to Reedley Family

Washington, DC -- U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today announced plans to introduce legislation to grant permanent resident status to members of the Buendia family, a Mexican family living in the Fresno area facing deportation.

The legislation would grant lawful permanent residence status to Jose and Alicia Buendia and their daughter 15-year old Ana Laura. The couple also has a 13 year old son, Jose, who is a United States citizen.

“I have decided to introduce a private bill on behalf of the Buendia family,” Senator Feinstein said. **“This is an extraordinary case – an immigration judge ruled, in fact, that there would be ‘exceptional and extremely unusual hardship’ to the family if they were to be deported.**

“The family has been in this country for 20 years and has built a life here. The Buendias own property, they work hard, they have children in school, and they deserve to stay.”

Jose and Alicia Buendia have lived in the United States since the 1980s. They currently live in Reedley, Calif., where they own their own home. Jose is a construction worker and has been employed by Bone Construction for the past five years. Alicia works as a seasonal fruit packer. Their daughter, Ana Laura, is in 10th grade at Reedley High School and has earned a 4.0 GPA.

Jose initially applied for Legalization with the Immigration and Naturalization Service in 1990 to take advantage of the 1986 amnesty law. His application however was not acted upon by the Immigration and Naturalization Service and ultimately Jose was classified as a member of a class action lawsuit, CSS v. Meese, due to differences over the interpretation of the amnesty law. An immigration judge ruled in 1999 that the family was in fact eligible for permanent residence, however, this ruling was later overturned by the Board of Immigration Appeals.

“This family has embraced the American dream, and I believe they should be allowed to continue to live in this country,” Senator Feinstein said. **“If this legislation is approved, the Buendias will be able to continue to make significant contributions to their community and to the United States. It is my hope, therefore, that Congress passes this private legislation.”**

The Buendias will not be deported as long as the private bill is pending before Congress. Without this private bill, the Buendias would have been deported to Mexico on January 14, 2004.

Private legislation is usually introduced on behalf of individuals whose compelling circumstances require Congress to act when administrative or legal remedies have been exhausted.

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